

## AN OLD DRUG STORE.\*

BY W. L. DUBOIS.<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Thomas O'Hara Crosswell, a physician, came to Catskill from Litchfield, Conn., and, in 1792, with his brother Mackay founded and published for many years the paper called the *Catskill Packet*. It was printed on a sheet of coarse blue paper about ten by twelve inches in size and contained the latest news brought by the fast sailing packet sloops, which in those days made the passage from New York to Catskill (wind and weather permitting) in about six days. It also contained many advertisements and was interspersed with numerous woodcuts which were said to be the handiwork of the Doctor. Only his spare time was devoted to the paper, for he was a physician the like of whom never had been nor will there probably ever be one of the profession who will secure the confidence, esteem and love in which the good old "Uncle Doctor," as he was called, was held by all ages, sexes, classes and conditions. He was a great favorite with the children, and his capacious pockets always contained a goodly supply of sugar plums and licorice for them. When the first Post Office was established in Catskill, George Washington appointed Dr. Crosswell postmaster, and how well he performed his duties may be inferred from the fact that through all the changes of administration of government, and through all the mutations of politics in the next fifty years, he held that position until his death, in 1845. He was survived by his wife, who lived to be 96; she died in 1861.

In 1795, Dr. Crosswell associated with him his protege and student Dr. Abel Brace and they opened the first drug store in Catskill. They did a large business in drugs, chemicals, dye stuffs, paints, oil and window glass, and also sold large quantities of potash, for in those days every farmer's wife made her own soap. They purchased their goods from the old house of H. H. Schieffelin & Company, then located at 104-106 John Street. Later, the firm name was changed to Shieffelin Bros. & Co. and they moved to 170 William Street. The goods were shipped by the sloops at that time. The drug store supplied the doctors with their drugs, and all the little fulling-mills located on the many streams in Delaware, Schoharie and Greene counties they supplied with dye-woods and the tanners with large quantities of whale oil. In 1822 they moved from the old location to the new brick building, corner Main & Water Sts., which has been occupied as a drug store ever since. After the death of Dr. Crosswell the business was taken over by William H. Wey who had married Dr. Crosswell's adopted daughter, and he conducted the business until his death in 1851 when his son Benjamin Wey became the proprietor. He conducted the business alone until 1860, when he formed a partnership with Mr. Lavelle. They overhauled and remodeled the old store which was then considered one of the finest stores along the Hudson River, but this partnership only lasted for two years as Mr. Lavelle died in 1862.

In the winter of 1863 Mr. Wey made me a proposal to become his partner and I resigned my position with Schieffelin Bros & Co. and came to Catskill March 1, 1863. After a pleasant partnership of thirteen years Mr. Wey retired and I became sole proprietor June 1, 1876. Everything was booming in Catskill at that

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<sup>1</sup> The author of this paper celebrated his ninetieth birthday at Portland.

time, for it was a noted summer resort and the gateway to the mountains, and there was also no Mountain railroad so the business was all done in Catskill. Later, the Catskill Mountain railway was built, so the mountain towns were able to get their supplies direct from New York and the town became less and less of a resort and there was a great change in the drug business, and by 1881 it had become almost entirely a patent and proprietary business. During the next 25 years there were opened in Catskill four more drug stores, making eight in all, and for a number of years it was hard work keeping the old store going but, finally, one by one four of them went out of business and now with only four left in the town we are each able to make a comfortable living. Business is conducted very differently from what it was when I came to Catskill 65 years ago. Then we had to go to New York to buy our goods; now the travelling salesmen come to us with their samples and take our orders.

In these days of the automobile, for almost every one has one, there is a tendency for the trade to be drawn from the smaller towns to the larger cities, especially where the department stores sell patent medicines and all the druggists' sundries at cost or below, just for an advertisement. I am very thankful for the good health that enables me to be at the "old drug store" every day and hope to be able to continue to go until the end. I am wondering what the business will be fifty years hence?

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#### AUSTRALIAN PROPRIETARY MEDICINE REGULATIONS.

Strict regulations regarding proprietary medicines are being adopted by the Health Department of Western Australia. It has been decided to enforce clauses four and six of Section 72 of the report dealing with the Uniform Standards for Foods and Drugs, which were decided upon at the annual conference in May 1927. The regulation provides that a declaration of the drugs contained in medicines or medicinal preparations for internal or external use shall appear in bold letters on the label of the package; also that any label relating "to any drug or medicine shall not claim to suggest that it will remedy or cure asthma, Bright's disease, cancer, consumption or gout, or that the drug or medicine is a panacea for, or is infallible, or is a cure for baldness, a skin food, hair food, or nerve food, or that it will develop certain parts of the body, raise the height, or eradicate wrinkles. The regulations will come into force in Western Australia on February 1, 1929.

In Victoria also consideration is being given to regulations dealing with the disclosure of formula of proprietary medicines. A final revision of the proposed regulations for Uniform Standards for Food and Drugs is being

made by the Victorian State Food Standards Committee, and it is expected that the matter will be submitted to the Minister for Health early in September.—(Assistant Trade Commissioner H. R. Buckley, Melbourne.)

#### CANADIAN P. A. T. A. WILL TEST COMBINES ACT.

The Proprietary Articles Trade Association has asked the Canadian government to make a reference to the Supreme Court of Canada as to the constitutionality of the Combines Act. The association contends that the law is *ultra vires*, as interfering with the rights of the provinces as established by the British North America Act. It is expected that the government will refuse the reference, and then the P. A. T. A. may have the matter tested by contravening the act and arguing unconstitutionality in defense.

The association was held to be an illegal combine in 1927.

#### INTERNATIONAL HOSPITAL • CONGRESS.

Governments of all countries with which the United States has diplomatic relations have been invited to send representatives to the First International Hospital Congress to be held during the week of June 12, 1929.